



Historic England

Street Furniture

Listing Selection Guide



Summary

Historic England's twenty listing selection guides help to define which historic buildings are likely to meet the relevant tests for national designation and be included on the National Heritage List for England. Listing has been in place since 1947 and operates under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. If a building is felt to meet the necessary standards, it is added to the List. This decision is taken by the Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). These selection guides were originally produced by English Heritage in 2011: slightly revised versions are now being published by its successor body, Historic England.

The DCMS' *Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings* set out the over-arching criteria of special architectural or historic interest required for listing and the guides provide more detail of relevant considerations for determining such interest for particular building types. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/principles-of-selection-for-listing-buildings>.

Each guide falls into two halves. The first defines the types of structures included in it, before going on to give a brisk overview of their characteristics and how these developed through time, with notice of the main architects and representative examples of buildings. The second half of the guide sets out the particular tests in terms of its architectural or historic interest a building has to meet if it is to be listed. A select bibliography gives suggestions for further reading.

This guide looks at the several categories of street furniture. The first comprises objects connected with the highways including street surfaces, pavements, bollards, street lighting and milestones. The second relates to the provision of public utilities such as drinking fountains, troughs, pumps and hydrants. Thirdly are letter boxes and telephone kiosks, key communications infrastructure, at least until recently.

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Front cover

A K4 telephone box on the corner of Clarence Crescent, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear (listed Grade II). Nicknamed the Vermillion Giant, the K4 (designed

1927) had stamp selling machines and a letter box in its rear panel. Fewer than 50 were produced.

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Introduction

Our streetscapes are greatly enriched by historic street furniture, which ranges from milestones to lamp posts, boundary walls to horse troughs, bollards to drinking fountains. But while roads are among the oldest features of the historic environment, their level of use makes their associated street furniture vulnerable to replacement, damaging change or removal. Its sheer ubiquity makes it sometimes overlooked and at risk of loss, especially items that are functionally redundant. Some features, such as drinking troughs, relics of horse-based transportation, or early gas lighting and overhead tram poles, which illustrate technology that once transformed everyday existence, can be quite modest. Others, such as the many drinking fountains erected from the 1860s onward, possess considerable intrinsic design quality. Humble as some structures might seem, their contribution to the public realm is often considerable, and ever greater respect is now accorded to the component parts of the street scene. Once common items, such as drinking fountains, are now becoming rare. The best examples will warrant statutory designation, and discoveries remain to be made.

Items of street furniture performed a range of functions, and there is inevitably cross-over with other selection guides in this area in particular. Hence whilst telephone boxes and letter boxes are treated fully in this guide, associated building types such as Post Offices are considered in the selection guide on [Infrastructure: Utilities and Communications](#). Items relating to law, order and public security such as police boxes, gibbets, stocks and whipping posts are treated in [Law and Government Buildings](#). In the main, small buildings and shelters such as lavatories

are similarly covered in the [Infrastructure: Utilities and Communications](#) selection guide, and bus and tram shelters are considered in that on [Infrastructure: Transport](#). Bandstands and ticket booths are discussed under [Garden and Park Structures](#), which also considers benches and drinking fountains in addition to their consideration here. Whilst wells and well-houses, as small structures, are considered in [Infrastructure: Utilities and Communications](#), water pumps, as street furniture, are treated here.

1 Historical Summary

There is a huge range of items which may be classified as street furniture; the three broad categories set out below include items that are most likely to be encountered, but are not exhaustive. Street furniture may be grouped into those items related to highways; those related to public utilities and those linked to communications. Some items, however, may fall into more than one category such as the milestone pump and water trough of about 1820 at Belton, Lincolnshire, or the eighteenth-century well house converted in 1953 to a bus shelter at Bramfield, Hertfordshire (both listed Grade II).

1.1 Structures relating to the highway

Historic street and other surfaces

Surfaces such as paving are an under-researched aspect of the historic environment. Their contribution to the historic environment can be considerable, as in St Ives (Cornwall), where over a dozen stretches of such surfaces have been listed as a reflection of their visual contribution and special interest to the town (Fig 1). Some surfaces, such as the rough masonry of the Vicars' Close in Wells (Somerset), may date back to medieval times, albeit with campaigns of repair. Surviving examples of eighteenth-century paving consisting of roughly squared stone with rubble infill can be found in London (principally in the Inns of Court) and Bath, where Pennant slabs offset the Royal Crescent (and are included in the Grade I listing) and other grand set-pieces of architecture. Other thoroughfares were covered with cobbles: the cobbled road surface of Merton Street, Oxford (fronting and complementing the Grade I listed Merton College), is listed, for instance. The eighteenth century also saw the widespread introduction of granite, initially in the form of cobbles and then squared setts brought mainly from Devon and Cornwall. Hard to work yet extremely durable, granite became much more widespread from the 1830s when steam power



Figure 1
Fore Street, St Ives, Cornwall. The street surface of granite blocks along the entire length of the street is listed at Grade II. The many listed street surfaces around St Ives add significantly to the unique character of the historic environment in that area.

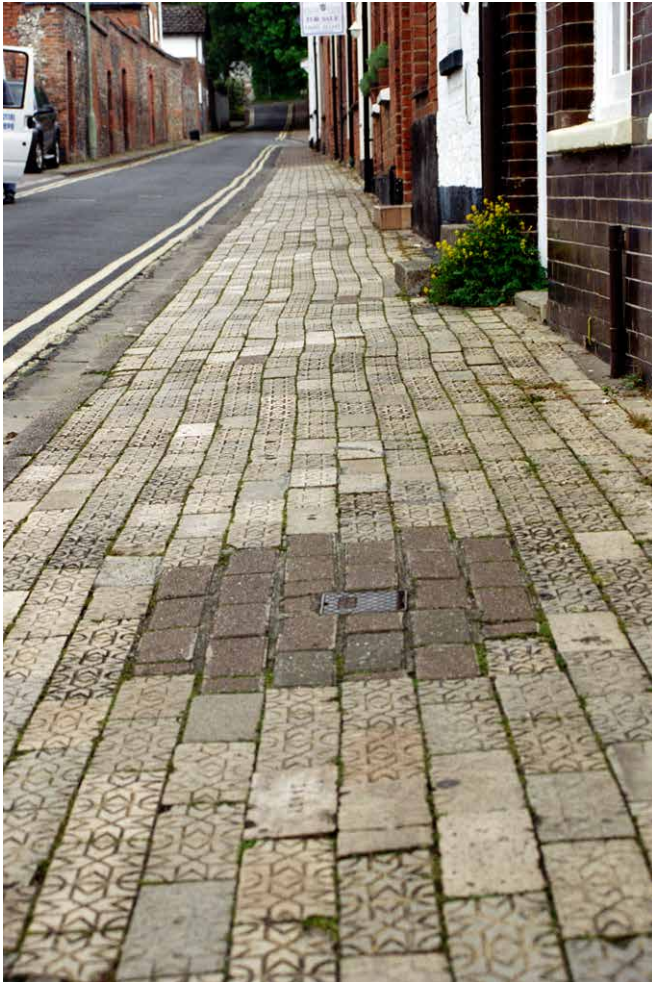


Figure 2
Grade II listed pavement of plain and patterned Victorian bricks, West Street, Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire.

and later railways facilitated its working and distribution. Wooden blocks, introduced from the 1830s onwards as a road surface, are more typical of nineteenth-century London, where there was a major mid-century campaign of resurfacing, but very few examples remain visible today. The extent of the survival of historic surfaces overall remains unquantified, hidden as they are beneath later asphalt covering, which was first used as a street surface in the 1830s although only widely from the early twentieth century.

It is only in exceptional cases, where they can be proved to be early and relatively undisturbed, where they can be regarded as structures, or where they lie within the curtilage of a listed building (such as a college quadrangle), that

street surfaces will be eligible for listing. Listing can only be applied to buildings or structures, so it is important to demonstrate that a road is indeed a structure, of deliberately built-up layers and topped with carefully placed uppermost surfaces. Fairly standard survivals of nineteenth-century paving are unlikely to be of sufficient special interest, atmospheric as they undoubtedly are; nor are coal hole covers designated, enjoyable as their cast iron forms can be. Nonetheless, examples of rare materials will warrant serious consideration, such as the Victorian patterned bricks that form the listed paving to West Street, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire (listed Grade II: Fig 2) or the decorative pebble pavements in Bath and Queen Streets, Lytham St Annes, Lancashire (listed Grade II). Other mechanisms may exist for their protection, notably their recognition via conservation area appraisals, and their retention during improvements and works.

Raised pavements and steps

Those such as the well-known examples of the 199 steps at Whitby, North Yorkshire (listed Grade I), and Shaftesbury's Gold Hill, Dorset (listed Grade II), are sometimes structures of clear note and intrinsic interest and can warrant designation in their own right; age, degree of survival and sometimes civic ambition will be key considerations. Like street surfaces, these can sometimes be of note geologically as well as having engineering or design interest, and rare or locally distinctive materials may strengthen a case. Stepcote Hill, in Exeter, which has changed very little over the centuries, is one such listed example, with a central passage of cobbles flanked on either side by steps.

Bollards

These were among the commonest forms of street furniture designed to help control traffic, in use from the eighteenth century to prevent the encroachment of vehicles onto the pavement, to protect buildings and the sides of entrances as at Prior's Cottage, West Malling, Kent, and to bar traffic or deter parking. Early examples were of wood, in due course replaced by iron, including redundant cannon (for instance, in

Royal dockyards like Portsmouth, Hampshire, and in Cannon Row, Hampstead, London Borough of Camden), although most bollards were made specifically for the job and may vary considerably in form. Granite became more common in the nineteenth century. Age, rarity and having a known manufacturer (whose names are sometimes cast on the bollard, such as, for example, the Carron Company of Falkirk, which manufactured both cannons and bollards) can be significant when making an assessment; inscriptions and dates will add to the interest. Grouping and context is also an important consideration: a complete run of bollards fronting eighteenth-century buildings is likely to be of more interest than isolated survivals within a redeveloped area. Similarly, bollards at either end of an alley will be of more interest than single survivals. Plain bollards are unlikely to warrant individual designation.

Railings

Containing traffic also involved railings. These were mainly of iron, and became common from the early eighteenth century onwards. Many, however, were recycled for scrap during the Second World War. Those surrounding St Paul's Cathedral are among the earliest documented examples still *in situ*. They may be worthy of listing in their own right or for group value with other listed buildings, depending on the age and quality of the ironwork, and will often be included within the listing of the buildings they front. Current practice, if designation is intended, is to describe the item in the list description and to specifically include it in the address heading; should the house they once fronted have gone, then a case may be made for separate listing. Earlier railings can incorporate other elements of street furniture such as light holders and snuffers – relics of older forms of street lighting – or foot scrapers: Alfred Street, Bath, retains fine examples including a winch serving a basement. Similar criteria apply to gates where age and the quality of ironwork and gate piers are likely to be the significant factors. Steel railings and gates will be relatively modern, and unlikely to be designation candidates. Authentic tollgates are rare and of considerable interest (see also the [Infrastructure:](#)

[Transport](#) selection guide for coverage of toll houses). Good specimens of regional types of stile may be listable, as are so-called kissing gates; they are likely to date from the eighteenth century or later, but they do need to be intact (as for instance the example by Williams of Bedford, listed at Grade II on the church wall at Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire) and not modern replacements. Only very rarely are wooden five bar gates, such as those giving access to Hadley Common, Barnet, of listable quality (here at Grade II); often, as here, designated examples incorporate other elements such as a kissing gate. Many registered historic parks and gardens are bounded by railings; even if not listed in their own right these will be defined elements of the designated landscape.

Various modes of assistance for traffic appear quite early. Traffic lights were introduced in 1927 and first installed at London's Piccadilly Circus, while Belisha beacons (named after the Minister for Transport, Leslie Hore-Belisha) came into use in 1935 and zebra crossings were introduced in 1949. Identifiably pre-war examples of both types are now rare and potentially listable.

Street lighting

Lighting in the form of gas lamps, arrived in 1807 at Pall Mall in London. There followed a proliferation of cast iron gas lamp posts in a prodigious range of designs, some highly ornamental. Like so much else, modern electric street lighting was the product of the Victorian period. In 1879 40 electric lights were put up between Westminster and Waterloo and, outside London, Chesterfield (Derbyshire) and Taunton (Somerset) were lit by electricity from the 1880s. However, gas lamps continued to be developed and installed into the mid-twentieth century. Many gas lamps have been modified for electric use, those originally designed for electricity tending to have taller and thinner posts. Sometimes lamp posts were combined with sewer vents, functioning as extractors for the foul air. Sheffield had 82 of these (the greatest number in any British town); 20 remain, all listed. Even such utilitarian objects could benefit from an aesthetic approach, such as the rare Grade II listed example in New



Figure 3
A rare combined ventilating pipe and gas lamp in New Cross Road, London (listed Grade II), installed 1897 as part of public conveniences for Greenwich District Board of Works. The ventilating pipe extracted foul gases from the lavatories below, to be burnt off by the gas mantle at the top. The Egyptian-pattern ventilating column was made by Macfarlane's Castings of Glasgow, to a design by Alexander 'Greek' Thomson.



Figure 4
Street lights of 1957 in Cambridge (listed Grade II), known as Richardson Candles after their designer, Sir Albert Richardson.

Cross (London Borough of Lewisham), designed by the renowned Victorian Scottish architect Alexander 'Greek' Thomson for the Macfarlane foundry in Glasgow (Fig 3). In recent decades there has been a fashion for historicist lamp posts, sometimes using modern castings of old designs, and care needs to be taken when establishing genuine original examples; ideally lanterns should be in place as well. Other factors to note include earliness of date and quality of design; group value may also be relevant. Ornamental street lights from the inter-war years of the twentieth

century may also be worthy of consideration: the 'candle' design by Sir Albert Richardson, found, for example, in central Cambridge, constitutes one such example (Fig 4).

Milestones, mileposts, and guideposts

These are the most widespread forms of street furniture and hundreds have been listed. Roads undergo such considerable alteration that they can be of particular note as testaments to the development of our transport network, and as reminders of the different perceptions of distance

in a pre-motorised age. They are often difficult to date – until the General Turnpike Act of 1773 it was not obligatory to put mileage on them – and some eighteenth-century examples, such as that at Beckenham, Kent (listed Grade II), give distances in furlongs (and sometimes poles and perches). However, it must be noted that inclusion of mileages is not a reliable guide to dating as some pre-1773 examples already carried this information. Before the late eighteenth century there was great individuality in form but obelisks and columns were popular thereafter. Milestones became prevalent in the mid-eighteenth century, when turnpike trusts were encouraged to provide such markers. Initially they were carved out of stone and a variety of forms are still evident around the country ranging from the large roughly hewn boulders of granite around south-west Cornwall, via the complex hexagonal forms on the Old Bath Road in Wiltshire, to the simple standard slate gravestone blanks of Allerdale in Cumbria. With the introduction of cast iron in the nineteenth century plates were introduced to update or regularise the earlier milestones by being fixed over the original lettering. Elsewhere new purpose designed milestones in cast iron were produced as the ornate example on Wigan Lane, Chorley (Lancashire), of 1837 demonstrates (Grade II). Therefore, lettered milestones in original positions are of interest, as are those where an iron plate has been added, but defaced stone posts and those lacking their cast iron plates are not usually listable. Mileposts with artistic touches, such as flowing script or depictions of hands pointing the way, may be of additional interest. Mileposts can also be a feature of canal towpaths and many of these are already listed using similar criteria.

Boundary markers

These, including placed boulders, and trees and other natural landscape features such as rock outcrops, were used from antiquity (featuring, for instance, in boundary clauses attached to Anglo-Saxon charters) to indicate the bounds of land units, and thereby any jurisdiction attached thereto, including estates, manors, townships and parishes. However, such markers fall outside the scope of listing. Later on, carved and cast

examples were introduced, typically set in a wall or incorporated in a bollard, sometimes displaying the name or initials of the territory or its owner. For instance, good cast examples at Barling Magna, Essex (listed Grade II), mark the bounds of the estate historically owned by St Bartholomew's Hospital, London. Parish markers are now the most numerous examples to survive; set into walls, or incorporated in bollards, they delineated the limits of parochial jurisdiction. Thus boundary markers may be of considerable historic importance and sometimes merit designation. A few have architectural elaboration, such as The Four Shire Stone, Chastleton, Oxfordshire (listed Grade II; Fig 5), an eighteenth-century



Figure 5
Four Shire Stone (listed Grade II), Chastleton, Oxfordshire, dated mid to late eighteenth century with nineteenth-century lettering. Inscriptions indicate GLOUCESTERSHIRE, WARWICKSHIRE, OXFORDSHIRE, WORCESTERSHIRE to west, north, east and south sides respectively. Due to county boundary changes it now stands at the boundary of Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Oxfordshire only.



Figure 6
Boundary marker, Staple Hill, Bristol. This Grade II listed boundary marker, of pre-cast concrete, is thought to have been erected between 1951 and 1966. It marks the historic boundary between the City of Bristol and the ceremonial county of Gloucestershire.



Figure 7
Early twentieth-century finger post (listed Grade II) in St Newlyn, Cornwall. Cast iron, probably by the Basset foundry, indicating distances to Newquay, Cubert, Holywell, Zelah, Truro, Redruth, Crantock, Netlyn East and Mitchell. It is unusual for the number of fingers.

ashlar limestone pillar marking the junction of four counties. An unusual mid-twentieth century example stands in Bristol, marking the boundary between the city and the ceremonial county of Gloucestershire (Fig 6).

Signposts

These have survived from the late seventeenth century onwards, but many have been subject to renewal. Intact examples that predate the County Councils Act of 1888 are eligible for listing, a good example being the three-metre high stone guide post of 1686 at Wroxton, Oxfordshire (listed Grade II). Post-1888 signposts, which followed more standardised forms, will generally only be listable

if they contribute significantly to a conservation area or the setting of a listed building, and have intrinsic interest. The same applies to other types of directional road sign: warning signs for floods were first advocated in the 1770s but signs proliferated with the increase in road traffic after the 1860s and changed character with the onset of motor traffic: increasing speeds made rapid legibility ever more vital. At first provision was left to the private motoring organisations like the RAC, but a period of standardisation began in 1904 with the issuing of design guidance by the Local Government Board. Many signs were removed in the Second World War to confuse would-be invaders, and not all were reinstated. Diminishing

numbers of ‘finger’ posts remain, but only those examples with a particularly high number of fingers, or rare and interesting survivals of municipal design within the relevant local context, will warrant designation (Fig 7). Designation is not always possible, but current best practice issued by the Highways Agency urges the retention or reinstatement of good examples in order to uphold the diversity and interest of the street scene. Rare early survivors, or those displaying high levels of intrinsic interest as at Eastington, Gloucestershire (Grade II), will be listable, otherwise the criteria for signposts applies, namely that examples from pre-1888 are eligible, but thereafter they must make a significant contribution to a conservation area or the setting of a listed building or have some other strong claim to recognition. One aid to dating is that from 1922 signposts were required to display the road classification number, which was attached to the arms using a sleeve connector. Modern motorway signage, introduced during the 1960s, is accorded high respect on account of its graphic quality, but such is the rate of replacement and upgrading that no examples have been listed. This inspired new signage for all other roads, designed under the auspices of the Worboys Committee and introduced in 1965, and still largely in use today.

Street names

Historically, these have been displayed in a number of ways – carved into or painted onto the side of a building, as an attached metal plaque or tile panel or a freestanding sign. Early examples of plaques, dating from the eighteenth century, could be quite elaborate: perhaps the earliest to survive is the plain stone tablet inscribed ‘Yorke Street 1636’ in Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, City of Westminster (mentioned in the Grade II listing of numbers 34-8). Such signs must have very clear design interest if they are attached to an otherwise unlisted (or unlistable) building, such as the masonry cartouche set within a brick surround noting ‘Here is Sclater Street 1717’ attached to 125 Brick Lane, Spitalfields (London Borough of Tower Hamlets; Fig 8), the whole building expressly listed because of the sign. Freestanding boards in their original positions that pre-date the twentieth century may be



Figure 8

An early eighteenth-century house with attached Grade II listed street name plaque. The inscription reads ‘Here is Sclater Street 1717’. The house itself has been extensively altered and is listed only for the sign attached to it.

eligible for designation, but their fabric should be original, and not a replacement.

Miscellaneous features, such as mounting blocks and porters’ rests (a shelf of wood, sometimes carried on iron supports, for resting burdens), may be listable if they survive reasonably well; group value with stables will assist the case of the former structure, as will an established early date. Public seats or benches date in the main from the nineteenth century, when local authorities and private individuals started to pay for their installation on streets and in other communal areas. During the Victorian and Edwardian period, seats (either of wood, cast iron or stone) reached

a high degree of elaboration and eclectic styling, and can be serious candidates for listing. Perhaps the finest ensemble anywhere is that along the Victoria Embankment in London, laid out by the Metropolitan Board of Works in the 1870s, which is one of the set-pieces of Victorian city improvement, and embellished with a variety of bench designs that shows Victorian eclecticism at its most vibrant. London specialities include the duty posts that functioned as boundary markers for the payment of tax or duty. These were erected in a 20 to 25 mile radius of the City of London from the seventeenth century until 1891, when the Corporation of London relinquished its rights to collect tolls on wine or coal. Initially made of wood, later iron or stone, the surviving examples date from the nineteenth century and are normally listed.

Bus shelters

Structures relating to public road transport include bus shelters, which date from the establishment of regular services – horse buses were introduced in the 1830s. Early examples tend to be quite robustly built, made of cast iron, timber and glass. Good examples can often be found in seaside locations, along esplanades (Fig 9). Design and group value are important factors when considering listing. Items such as tram and trolley bus poles that date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries may be listable, especially if they survive as a series. Electricity transformer stations that encase the electrical apparatus used by the electric tramways, usually take the form of round cast iron boxes, rather like large pillar boxes, and date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.



Figure 9
Hastings, East Sussex. A Grade II listed bus shelter of about 1900. Built of wood, cast iron and glass with a shingled roof and featuring decorative cast iron on the columns. Between the columns are wood and glazed

panels with beaded panelling enclosing four original wooden benches. There is a similar bus shelter at Rock-A-Nore.

They are rare and will normally be listable if clearly identifiable as such. There are many other miscellaneous items of street furniture and not all can be summarised here. For instance, cabmen's shelters are one of the few relics of the horse age to remain in use, albeit now for taxi cab drivers. The distinctive green-painted cottage-style cabmen's wooden shelters in London date mainly from late nineteenth or early twentieth century and provide a useful benchmark against which non-metropolitan examples can be judged, such as the taxi-rank office at York railway station (listed Grade II).

1.2 Public utilities

The category of utilities, covering water supply and power, is accorded a separate selection guide ([Infrastructure: Utilities and Communications](#)): structures touched on here are mainly those smaller associated objects in the public realm, such as fountains and troughs.

Drinking fountains

Moves to supply drinking water in the street began in earnest in the nineteenth century, prompted by the closure of town and village pumps (on sanitary grounds, as it was realised from the 1850s that cholera was a water-borne disease) and an increasing acceptance of the need for public water supply. This development was vigorously supported by the temperance movement which later sought to promote water drinking as a safe and morally preferable form of refreshment. In Liverpool, about thirty drinking fountains were erected 1854-8 by Charles Pierre Melly, who had seen examples during a visit to Geneva in 1852. The first public drinking fountain in London was opened in 1859, set into the railings in front of St Sepulchre's Church, Snow Hill, City of London. This was to prove highly influential; an 1861

fountain in Walcot Street, Bath, emulated its Romanesque style and function. Many were erected by The Metropolitan Drinking Fountain Association (founded in 1859). Drinking fountains come in a variety of forms, ranging from freestanding to smaller affairs attached to walls. Materials varied too, from polychromatic stone designs to cast iron ones such as the elaborate Coronation Fountain of 1911 at March, Cambridgeshire, produced by the Saracen Foundry of Glasgow. Granite and marble became perhaps the most common materials for later Victorian examples. Decoration and ornament add to their special interest: Victorian standards of applied design could be extremely high, so aesthetic values can be key determinants. Some of these structures were erected as utilitarian forms of memorial carrying biblical or moralising texts and images, which can add greatly to their interest. An association with a noted philanthropist may add significance, as may a proximity to other listed structures. They are amongst the most varied and significant forms of street furniture.

Drinking troughs

Special provision also began to be made for cattle, horses and dogs in the nineteenth century (Fig 10). These were often provided by charitable associations. Best known of these was The



Figure 10

Drinking trough in front of the Moot Hall in Ireby, Cumbria. The trough is early nineteenth century, pre-dating the late nineteenth-century wall. Though damaged, the trough's shaped back and cast iron

lion-head spout can still be seen. The trough has group value with the Grade II listed Moot Hall.

Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association (the name was altered in 1867 to include troughs), which was responsible for over a thousand troughs in Britain and overseas, about half in London. Early troughs of iron or wood are particularly rare, and were usually replaced from the 1860s by the more familiar and more enduring granite examples, mainly dating from the late nineteenth century. The better examples are generally listed, with design, inscriptions, earliness and degree of survival being key considerations. It helps if they retain their original position, which early, large-scale Ordnance Survey maps will indicate. Troughs are the most numerous reminders of the now-vanished presence of animals in city life, and in this motorised age they possess an added poignancy as a result. Sometimes they are explicitly sentimental tokens of regard for animals, such as the 1930s example in Chesterton Road, Cambridge, erected by a Siamese prince in tribute to his pet dog.

Pumps and Hydrants

Early examples of pumps, the first major expansion of water provision, tend to be of rudimentary construction, comprising lead pipes with wooden boxes, but with the increasing use of cast iron they became more elaborate. Complete examples from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries may be eligible for designation, when they survive in reasonable condition; otherwise, they may be included in the designation of the building to which they are attached. Hydrants may be listable for rarity and quality of casting. Public lavatories are considered in the [Infrastructure: Utilities and Communications](#) selection guide, as are conduit houses.

1.3 Communications

The letter box and the telephone kiosk, which form two of the most numerous categories of designated street furniture, are iconic and cherished in the public consciousness.

Royal Mail post box

This was introduced following the 1840 postal reform that led to the building of post offices in



Figure 11

Water pump and milestone (listed Grade II) of about 1820 at Belton, Lincolnshire. An example of a multi-purpose construction, providing water for travellers and animals as well as distances to Lincoln and London.

all towns and many villages. The first post (or letter) boxes were hexagonal in form, but a wide variety of other designs quickly followed. Pillar-type post boxes dating from the period 1852-79, such as the attractive hexagonal 'Penfold' type, dating from 1866, are scarce and will almost always be listable. In 1859 an improved cylindrical design was created for standard use nationwide. From 1857 wall-type post boxes came into use for fixing into existing walls. Only exceptionally early examples will be eligible (although they may form part of a wall that is listable in its own right). Small lamp-post boxes were first introduced in 1896 for use in London squares and later in other areas, particularly rural locations. By the end of the century there were over 33,500 roadside post boxes in the United Kingdom, and currently there are over 85,000 in England alone. Since 1852 the main changes have been variations on a common

theme and radically new designs appear only in the 1960s and '80s. Post boxes contribute to the character and appearance of their locality and, in recognition of this, Historic England and the Royal Mail, with the approval of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, agreed a joint policy in 2002 for the retention and conservation of all Royal Mail post boxes in operational service at their existing locations, unless exceptional circumstances necessitate their relocation. This [joint policy](#) was renewed in 2015.

In the light of this and while this policy remains in place, as a general rule further letter boxes will not be added to the statutory List unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Telephone kiosks

The earliest examples appeared at the end of the nineteenth century. The earliest standardised design, known as the K1, was designed in 1921 and constructed in concrete with a red wooden door. Dissatisfaction with the result led to a competition being held by the Postmaster General in 1924. The selected design, the K2, was by the eminent architect Giles Gilbert Scott, and consisted of a neo-classical cast iron cubicle with a segmentally vaulted roof and reeded strips to the corners; the crown, symbol of the GPO, was perforated and set within the upper faces of the canopy. The red telephone box is regarded as a masterpiece of modern industrial design and has acquired iconic (and international) status.

The commonest type of phone box to survive is the K6, introduced in 1935 to celebrate the jubilee of King George V (Fig 12). Rather smaller than the K2 and without the reeded strips, the K6 is usually painted red overall, with the crowns situated in the top panels being applied in relief, not perforated; where the K2 had 6 x 3 panes per side, the K6 had eight strips of glass per side, with narrow margin lights to each. The earliest types of kiosk are scarce and normally eligible for listing; the very few surviving K1s are already listed. Due to the large number of K6-type kiosks that have survived, selection is determined on the basis of their group value with other listed buildings, and a policy on this has been agreed with DCMS



Figure 12

A Grade II listed K6 type telephone kiosk on the Eskdale Hardknott Pass, Cumbria. This type was designed in 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and made by various contractors out of cast iron. The dramatic setting adds to the interest of this example.

after discussion with BT. To be added to the List a kiosk normally needs to have a strong visual relationship with more than one listed building. However, it can also be listable if the setting is of exceptional special interest in its own right; or if the kiosk is in proximity to a single Grade I listed building; or if the single nearby Grade II building has a particular contextual relationship to the kiosk, such as a rural post office. Later GPO kiosks possess lesser claims to special interest, although so few of the K8 design (1968-83) survive that they do have rarity value. Of the private kiosks erected by the motoring organisations, examples of the original design of the AA box, dating from the 1930s, are eligible for designation. Similarly eligible are all early RAC boxes, although it is thought that most have been replaced.

2 Specific Considerations

Prone to considerable wear and tear, it is not surprising that little pre-nineteenth-century street furniture survives. Examples from before about 1850 will often have greater interest in part because they are constructed from locally-derived materials, intermeshing with their natural surroundings and with structures such as walls and buildings to give a sense of place. Others relate to specific regional customs, or reflect the local requirements of a particular trade or industry.

Most historic examples of street furniture date from the Victorian period onwards. Much is a product of the Industrial Revolution, and the historic development of cast iron and individual foundries lies at its heart. Each type of street furniture has a different date range and some, such as Belisha Beacons or RAC boxes, only appeared (and then largely disappeared again) in the twentieth century. Street furniture is particularly prone to three factors which affect survival: renewal, especially for items made from timber such as stocks or signposts; relocation, for instance, the many resited boundary markers and milestones, or transplanted lamp stands; and removal. Road and junction realignments often result in minor relocations of signposts and other street furniture. This only becomes an issue if the relocation is significant, such as moving a mile or sign post so that it becomes inaccurate, or altering a designed view such as a deliberate alignment of a cross with a road line and lych-gate. Timber items, such as stocks, may be listable for historic special interest reasons,

even if their timber has been replaced on a like-for-like basis. With cast iron objects, questions of authenticity can be difficult to resolve since foundries continued to supply castings from old stock up to about 1950, and modern castings may have been taken from old designs as part of street improvement programmes. The general presumption is to give consideration for protection to all surviving pre-1850 examples. Thereafter, greater selectivity is required based upon rarity, degree of survival, design quality and other considerations such as group value.

Individual buildings must be assessed on their own merits. However, it is important to consider the wider context and where a building forms part of a functional group with one or more listed (or listable) structures this is likely to add to its own interest. Key considerations are the relative dates of the structures, and the degree to which they were functionally inter-dependent when in their original uses.

Although some examples of street furniture hold considerable historic and architectural interest in their own right the case for designation is considerably strengthened by association with other examples of the street scene and when pleasing groups speak eloquently of their function – hence a row of well-designed bollards can hold greater interest than a single isolated example, while a telephone box close to an early letterbox, as on Evesham Road, Cheltenham, forms a cohesive historic group. It should be noted that to date the vast majority of street furniture, where listed, is at Grade II.

Much street furniture is relatively portable, and capable of being resited. If it can be demonstrated that an item has stood in the same location for a considerable period of time, the case for listing will be stronger. Items which have been brought in to a location from elsewhere in recent decades will not generally be eligible.

2.1 Extent of listing

Amendment to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides two potential ways to be more precise about what is listed.

The empowerments, found in section 1 (5A) (a) and (b) of the 1990 Act, allow the List entry to say definitively whether attached or curtilage structures are protected; and/or to exclude from the listing specified objects fixed to the building, features or parts of the structure. These changes do not apply retrospectively, but New listings and substantial amendments from 2013 will provide this clarification when appropriate.

Clarification on the extent of listing for older lists may be obtained through the Local Planning Authority or through the Historic England’s Enhanced Advisory Service, see www.HistoricEngland.org.uk/EAS.

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Acknowledgements

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